Bellingham

BELLINGHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER

OF HEALTH

64TH. ANNUAL REPORT

1943.

As in previous years under instructions from the Ministry of Health the contents of this report are confined to urgent matters affecting Public Health, Infectious Diseases and Maternity and Child Welfare arrangements.

Infectious Diseases.

The year opened with an epidemic of mild influenza throughout the area. In addition there were many cases of measles in Ridsdale and also an epidemic of chickenpox in Bellingham. One isolated case of Scarlet Fever also occurred.

In February the Chickenpox still continued in Bellingham. The Measles outbreak at Ridsdale had subsided but the disease broke out in Wark and continued throughout February and March. In addition Whooping Cough made its appearance at Kielder.

March saw very little infectious disease except for Measles at Wark and a few isolated cases of chickenpox.

In April Whooping Cough broke out in Wark and continued throughout April, May and June. One isolated case of Scarlet Fever and Two German Measles cases also occurred in April.

In May two cases of pneumonia and two cases of measles also widespread mild influenza occurred.

June saw a further measles outbreak at Woodburn and also one or two cases of Whooping Cough, two cases of pneumonia and two cases of German Measles.

Wark was again the centre of an outbreak of measles which continued into August. There were one or two isolated cases of Scarlet Fever in July and August one case of Tuberculosis in each of these months.

In September six recovering cases of Scarlet Fever were discovered at Otterburn School. No doubt some child had returned following school holidays having had scarlet fever which had not been recognised. With the help of the School Medical Officer a detailed examination was made of all the children and all suspicious cases excluded and kept under observation. The outbreak died out very quickly.

In October, whooping cough developed in one or two families in Ridsdale but was prevented from spreading. One case of Diphtheria was discovered the only one in the year.

November saw the renewal of a widespread attack of Influenza. In addition there were two cases of Scarlet Fever, two German Measles and one Chickenpox and one Pneumonia.

In December fourteen cases of Chickenpox were reported at Otterburn, also one Scarlet Fever and two Pneumonias.

During the year there has been a good deal of infectious disease, Wark being particularly bad. It is interesting to note only one case of Diphtheria. This is probably due to the fact that nearly all children of pre-school age have been immunised against Diphtheria and also a considerable number of children at School.

Another noteworthy feature is the comparatively few cases of Scarlet Fever. It has been found that prompt use of Scarlatina Antitoxin on Scarlet Fever patients and all known contacts immediately limits the outbreak and prevents an epidemic and the money spent by the Council on this antitoxin saves a much greater expenditure on hospital treatment for Scarlet Fever.

With reference to the case of Paratyphoid B. reported last year, one inmate of the house was found to be a carrier and he was immediately removed from the premises and accommodated elsewhere

There is no doubt that the great majority of infectious outbreak in the area are due to importation of infection from outside areas.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

The visiting of young children and expectant mothers is most efficiently carried out by Mrs. Harper from Rothbury who does Otterburn and Redewater and Mrs. Little who covers the rest of the area.

These two Health Visitors do an immense amount of good work.

There is a monthly Clinic in addition at Bellingham which is held by Dr. Glen. Davison on the second Thursday of each month at 2 p.m.

Maternity work is ably carried out by six district nurses under the County Nursing Association and also a good many cases go to the Maternity Hospitals at Corbridge and at Dilston.

GEO. W. KIRK.

Medical Officer of Health.